

Sir Lucan and his brother Sir Bedivere decide to bring the wounded Arthur to the safety of a town. They try to lift him up again. But Lucan, who was wounded in battle, collapses and dies. Bedivere weeps at the death of his brother and the likely death of his king.



“Now leave this mourning and weeping gentle knight,” said the King, “for all this will not avail me.¹³ For wit thou¹⁴ well, and might I live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore. But my time passeth on fast,” said the King. “Therefore,” said King Arthur unto Sir Bedivere, “take thou here Excalibur my good sword and go with it to yonder water’s side; and when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword in that water and come again and tell me what thou sawest there.”

“My lord,” said Sir Bedivere, “your commandment shall be done, and I shall lightly¹⁵ bring you word again.”



Sir Bedivere takes the sword to the lake. But he cannot bring himself to throw it in. It simply seems too valuable. There are even jewels in the hilt, or handle. So Bedivere hides the sword under a tree and returns to Arthur.



“What saw thou there?” said the King.

“Sir,” he said, “I saw nothing but waves and winds.”

“That is untruly said of thee,” said the King. “And therefore go thou lightly again and do my commandment; as thou art to me loved and dear, spare not, but throw it in.”



Vocabulary Development

commandment (kuh MAND muhnt) *n.* order; command

13. **avail** (uh VAYL) **me** help me; do me any good.

14. **wit thou** know you.


15. **lightly** quickly.



Culture Note

In the early Middle Ages, it was the custom of warriors to give a name to their sword. Why do you think they did this?

English Language Development

 *Thou* and *thee* are two more old forms of *you*, and *passeth* is an old verb form that would be *passes* today. The selection uses several old verb forms ending in *eth* or *est*. Circle two more in this paragraph. Near each, write the verb form that would be used today.